

SUNDAY ZOOM WORSHIP: 9:30 a.m.
WEBSITE: gachurchmpls.org

OFFICE: 612-789-7256
FAX: 612-789-1334

EMAIL: info@gachurchmpls.org
INTERIM PASTOR: Susan Masters

Wednesday Evening Conversations About Welcome

On Wednesday evenings during Advent, our Racial Justice Committee will lead us in conversation together about “welcome” at GA: What being a welcoming congregation means, what scripture says about welcome, what happens when we don’t welcome others well, etc. Each week, we will make use of breakout rooms in Zoom to discuss a topic from 7:00-7:30, then have a brief evening prayer service from 7:30-7:45. Below is the recurring Zoom link for all four weeks.

Wednesday Evening Advent Conversations About Welcome...

December 2, 9, 16, and 23 – 7:00-7:45 p.m.

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89050758248?
pwd=WmRseVE1M0RoblZQZzNab1djNzIDdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89050758248?pwd=WmRseVE1M0RoblZQZzNab1djNzIDdz09)

Meeting ID: 890 5075 8248

Passcode: 582199



Virtual Christmas Program on Sunday, December 20



We have a long-held tradition at GA of staging a Christmas program each year, typically presented by the Sunday school children. Unfortunately, that can’t happen this year due to the pandemic. Never fear – we have a plan to tell the Christmas story in a creative way in Zoom worship on Sunday, December 20. We have gathered a multi-generational group of volunteers to stage the program virtually during our 9:30 a.m. Zoom service that day. All the actors will perform from home; and YOU can be part of the program by dressing up as one of the characters in the Christmas story! We hope that this will be a meaningful way of sharing the familiar story in this most unusual year. Start planning your outfit now, and plan to be in Zoom worship on Dec. 20 as we hear a group of GA members share the Christmas story as the message of the day.

The Zoom link will be shared in the Saturday email on December 19 as usual, but you can plan ahead with the meeting ID and passcode here: 891 9247 7528 (passcode: 1509).



Virtual/Zoom Worship at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting ID: 824 7181 8705

Passcode: 1509

You can log on anytime after 3:30 p.m.

***Plan to have a candle ready to light
at home when we sing “Silent Night.”
Advent and Christmas blessings to one and all!***

Transition Musings
Interim Pastor Susan Masters
December 2020

Advent: Liturgical Civil Disobedience

Excerpted and edited from the sermon on Advent 1 (November 29)
Mark 13:24-37

... We live in a time when it seems our culture has abandoned the effort to connect Christmas to the birth of the Christ child. The marketing of the season begins earlier each year, and the pressure to buy bigger, shinier, and more disposable only increases as Christmas approaches. Is it any wonder that, by the time December 25 finally rolls around, most of us are tired of it all and, on December 26, we're ready to take down our trees and move on to New Year's Eve?

And yet, as someone else has said: If we're tired of Christmas by the time December 25 comes around, we haven't done a good job with Advent....

I would argue that few things save Christians from this Christmas hamster wheel quite like observing Advent - one of the most counter-cultural liturgical things Christians do. Because while the rest of the world has embarked upon a big party that started a month ago, Advent compels us, bellies still pregnant, to move into a season of waiting. And as the world's celebration gets noisier and shinier, ours becomes increasingly quieter and darker.

To be clear, much of the Christmas celebration is great! Pandemic aside, the parties are great, the music is wonderful, the lights, the bells, the spirit, the snow - It's. All. Good! But it announces the arrival of a baby who has not come to us. It passes out cigars before the doctor has even proclaimed "It's a boy!"

It is, among other things, about timing. And waiting. And the natural order of things.

In this day and time, our electronic gadgets allow us to jump right over a lot of waiting. And if it's COVID test results you're waiting for, you're deeply grateful for a mercifully short wait time. If your loved one is traveling around the world, of course you're grateful for an instant email, rather than a letter that takes days to arrive, to let you know they're safe and having a good time. Let's be clear - truncating wait time is not inherently a bad thing.

But sometimes it can be. Because it can send us hurtling through time, singularly focused on the end result - whatever that might be - while all the time distracting us from the journey we must take to get there. When we succumb to our culture's lure and we zoom right through - or even past - Advent, straight to the celebration of Christmas, we miss the opportunity - indeed, the gift - to hunker down, to swell with anticipation, and to be drawn into the quiet and holy darkness that will accompany us along our journey of waiting

Friends, in this season of Advent, as the world swirls around us, I invite you not to be a Scrooge. Please don't say "It's not Christmas - we can't sing carols yet!" Or judge those who shop on Black Friday or put up their Christmas trees before Thanksgiving. The world does not need more Christians, sitting smugly in the corner, arms folded, faces contorted, telling everyone else they're wrong. And as 2020 winds down, bringing an end to one of the most stressful years in memory, let's be gentle with one another whenever we can. DO enjoy

this wonderful time of year with your loved ones! Sing a carol! Decorate your house! Open Christmas presents early! Waiting does not preclude those things, I promise!

But as you do, please don't allow yourself to get SO pulled into the noise and the lights and the shopping that you miss Advent all together. Dare to do a radical thing and stay grounded in Advent. Resist the temptation to jump ahead to Christmas. Dare to live as though you truly believe the party has not yet started because our bellies are still swollen and the baby has not yet come

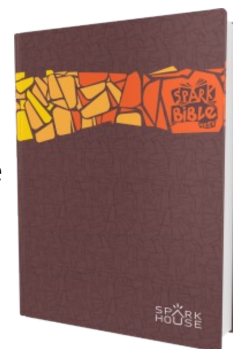
Here at GA, waiting is the name of our game these days. We're waiting to discern what God has in store next for us. What our missional call is to our corner of Northeast Minneapolis. Who our next settled pastor will be. And, along with the rest of the world, we're waiting for our lives to return to normal. To hug our loved ones. To return to the activities that bring us pleasure and meaning.


Friends, with bellies pregnant and full of the hope of new life and new opportunities, I invite us all to heed the gospel words of Jesus to be ready and to keep watch as we move into the holy darkness and quiet of Advent. Watching. Hoping. Waiting. And, in that darkness and quiet, fully expecting to find God there, waiting for us.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Third Grade Bibles

One of our faith formation traditions at GA is to present third graders who attend Sunday school with *Spark* Bibles. We normally do this during a worship service. Obviously, we have to change-up our method this year due to the pandemic. Pastor Susan is going to deliver the Bibles to the five recipients' homes; we will then have a presentation liturgy during worship on December 6. Congratulations to the five third graders who will be receiving Bibles: *Madelyn Kenyon, James McGraw, Lylah Nordling, Jenna Schuette, Emmaline Weidmann.*



A d v e n t	– LISTEN TO PHIL'S ORGAN VIDEO	
	– MAKE AN ADVENT WREATH	
	– JOIN A WEDNESDAY SERVICE	
	– SIT QUIETLY AND LISTEN FOR GOD	
	– DONATE TO A FAVORITE CHARITY	
	– JOIN A SUNDAY SERVICE	
	– COMPLETE "HOPE" COLORING PAGE	20
	– PRAY WITH PRAYER CARD	
	– GO (OR LOOK) OUTSIDE	
	– SIT & ENJOY A HOT DRINK	
	– READ A DEVOTIONAL	
	– SING AN ADVENT HYMN	
	– CALL A LONG-DISTANCE RELATIVE	20



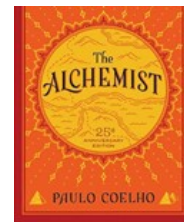
There are ways you can stay connected to your GA family during this time when we are not able to gather in person. The activities listed on this page can help you do just that. If you have any questions about any of these activities or ministries, contact the person leading that particular ministry or contact Pastor Susan or Deacon Phil (their contact information is listed on the back page of this newsletter).

Quilters to Meet December 3

The Quilters will meet on Thursday, December 3 – 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. **Don't forget your mask!**

Monday Night Book Club Meets on December 14 via Zoom

Join us on December 14 via Zoom to discuss Paulo Coelho's modern classic *The Alchemist*. In this novel, follow young Santiago as he travels in search of riches. His journey leads him to treasures beyond his imagination. Our Zoom meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m., and we will discuss the entirety of this novel. See below for the Zoom Meeting ID. Questions? Email Andrea Carter at andreaLcart@gmail.com. All are welcome! Zoom Meeting ID: 872 5133 0304



Virtual GA Choristers Meeting – Wednesday, December 16



Deacon Phil invites all our young people in elementary and middle school to meet with him on Zoom for a 20-minute Virtual GA Choristers session once a month. This month's session will be Wednesday, December 16, at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome to come and sing some familiar songs, including some Christmas carols. You can even have a chance to sing "Happy Birthday" to Deacon Phil. ☺ A Zoom invitation will be sent in the Saturday email the week before, but the Zoom ID Meeting ID is 883 2994 0742 with the familiar passcode of 1509.

Did you know that our adult choirs meet for choir chat every Wednesday night? They don't sing on Zoom, but they enjoy a time of fellowship and chat to stay connected with one another during this time of separation.

Join Zoom Storytime this Winter!

Let's stay connected and engaged in our community through a regular virtual family storytime for youth or those young at heart. We will have stories read live on at 9:00 a.m. December 6, 13, and 20 (the 27th is TBD - please watch the email blast for an update). Also, there will be a replay of stories posted on the GA Facebook page in case you aren't able to make it live. All are welcome to this 25-minute virtual family storytime, which will include an interactive reading of a picture book and a time for show and tell at the end. Watch the Saturday email blast or GA Facebook page for the Zoom link to join in. Contact Kari at kari.m.l.navratil@gmail.com or text/call 612-501-1837 for more information or to receive the meeting link. Hope to see you there!



Sunday Zoom Worship – 9:30 a.m. Every Sunday

See the Saturday email each week for Zoom invitation link.

Or contact Deacon Phil Holzman for call-in information.



Greetings from Our Deacon in This Continuing Pandemic

Greetings as we begin this Advent season – as we continue in our pandemic conditions of being separated from one another. We have just gone through a very unusual and difficult Thanksgiving holiday and we are facing a Christmas like no other we have experienced. We at GA are doing our best to stay connected with one another as well as keeping alive some of our traditions of the Advent and Christmas season. One of the saddest things for me this month is that we are not able to have our annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. I cannot tell you how much I miss our choirs! But I am happy that we will be able to do a virtual Christmas program on December 20 and our Christmas Eve service via Zoom as outlined on the front page of this newsletter. My hope for each one of you is that you can find ways to make this season meaningful and positive even as we are faced with this pandemic and the resulting separations and isolation.

Once again, I want to remind you to look on our Facebook page each Wednesday when I post some organ music. Each Wednesday, my trip to the GA office includes a recording session of 6-10 minutes of organ music that I post on my personal Facebook page and on the GA Facebook page. This month I will share music for the Advent and then Christmas seasons. I'm working on an idea for Epiphany, so watch this column in the January "Gazette" for more information about that! I continue to be grateful for the many encouraging messages that I receive about the music that I'm providing; I am glad that so many of you are finding the music to be meaningful and helpful.

Holiday blessings to all of you as we continue to find our way through this challenging time!

Deacon Phil Holzman

philh@gachurchmpls.org

612-789-7256, ext. 11 (leave a voice message)

320-304-1774 (cell phone/send a text message)



Thanks, Cullen!

The lawn mower has been winterized, the leaves are all gone, and we've transitioned to Christmas decorations, but we want to say a heartfelt THANK YOU to GA member Cullen Arneson for his hard work in keeping the church yard mowed this past summer. Thanks for a job well done, Cullen!

GA Is Decorated for the Season

Thanks to many GA members, including (but perhaps not limited to) the Arneson family, Larson/Brown household, Cindy Bach, Sarah Olson, our church is already decorated for the season. There's a Christmas tree in the yard; the other trees in the yard have lights; there are candles in the church windows; and there's a Christmas tableau in the 27th Avenue entryway! You'll want to make sure you take some time to drive by and take in the sight this month. If you want to sign-up to view the lights outside the church and use the fire pit that we've purchased, you can use the sign-up link provided in each Saturday's email.



Listen to the Northeast Chorale's Virtual Fall "Concert"

The board and artistic director, Phil Holzman, are pleased to present a Northeast Chorale virtual choir concert! Fourteen of our singers took on the unique task of singing together virtually. Each singer practiced and recorded their part safely at home and then, through technical wizardry, each recording was combined to make one virtual Northeast Chorale. You can find the recordings of the three anthems that the singers recorded by going to northeastchorale.org and then clicking "Watch Here" under the Virtual Choir picture.

Monthly Financial Report

	October 2020 Actual	October 2020 YTD	October 2019 YTD
Income	\$21,000.62	\$263,641.52	\$267,840.03
Expenses	<u>\$30,323.37</u>	<u>\$222,440.99</u>	<u>\$285,516.96</u>
Inc-Exp	<\$ 9,322.75>	\$ 41,200.53	<\$ 17,676.93>

October's financials reflect a \$9,481.00 expense for sidewalk repairs. Despite the expense causing this month's deficit, we continue to have a savings cushion of \$41,200.53. Thank you for remembering GA with your October giving. **A warm welcome to Zach Copa, GA's new Finance Manager!** He met with Dan on Thurs., Nov. 12, to begin training. Thank you to Dan Hager for his years of service and so graciously staying on as Finance Manager until Zach's hiring. Dan will continue to train and support Zach through this transition period. Thanks also to Lynn Lurvey for her assistance with weekly financial journal entries. The Furlough Fund Task Force received and approved one request for \$250.00 on October 29. The Audit Committee met on October 25, to conduct the annual audit. Adrienne Bisping, Andrea Carter, and Dan Hager reviewed financial statements from 2019. The Finance Team reviewed the committee's findings at the November Finance Meeting. Thank you, Audit Committee, for your hard work!

Next Finance Meeting via Zoom: Thursday, December 10, at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Carter
Treasurer

Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church *A Reconciling in Christ Congregation*

Sunday Zoom Worship at 9:30 a.m.

Church Staff ...

The Rev. Susan Masters, Interim Pastor (Ext. 10)
pastorsusan@gachurchmpls.org
Cell phone (for pastoral emergencies): 612-327-7454

Deacon Phil Holzman, Minister of Word & Service (Ext. 11)
(Worship & Music, Parish Administration)
philh@gachurchmpls.org
Cell phone (for texts/calls): 320-304-1774

Zach Copa & Dan Hager, Finance Managers (Ext. 14)
danh@gachurchmpls.org

Joel Lurvey, Contemporary Choir Director
joel.lurvey@gmail.com

Linda Lindahl, Church Custodian



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Regarding 2021 Offering Envelopes

Our offering envelopes have been ordered and are on their way. When they arrive we will announce times for folks to stop by church to pick them up – beginning later in December. Unfortunately, we can't publish exact dates yet because we don't have an exact arrival date for the envelopes.



Stay tuned to the Saturday email, announcements during worship, and the January "Gazette" for times for envelope pick-up. In the meantime, you can continue to give by check even if you run out of offering envelopes. We will keep you posted!

Gustavus Adolphus Church Council

Jenny Parker, President	
Sarah Larson, Vice-President	
Cindy Bach, Secretary	
Andrea Carter, Treasurer	
James Hamilton	Ed Huble
Dee Kjera	Erik Peterson